



APC Quarterly Newsletter

Volume XII

January 2014

Table of Contents

- [Save the Date! APC Quarterly Meeting](#)
- [Agency of the Quarter](#)
- [New Training Webinars Posted on CCSC Web site](#)
- [Score Cards](#)
- [Reminder for LAPC Quarterly Reviews and APC Certification Checklists](#)
- [Dates for Cardholder Account Suspensions and Suspension Lifts](#)
- [How to Complete the Comments Tab in Access Online](#)
- [CCSC FY14 Schedule of Activities](#)

Calendar of Events

January 2014	February 2014	March 2014
8th: Cardholder Suspensions	10th: Cardholder Suspensions	7th: APC Certifications of LAPC Quarterly Reviews Due to CCSC
9th and 23rd: Cardholder Suspension Lifts	11th and 24th: Cardholder Suspension Lifts	10th: Cardholder Suspensions
20th: Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday (Government Closed)	17th: President's Day (Government Closed)	11th and 24th: Cardholder Suspension Lifts
23rd: APC Quarterly Meeting		

Save the Date! APC Quarterly Meeting

The CCSC will hold the next APC Quarterly Meeting on **Thursday, January 23, 2014**.

All APCs are invited to join in this discussion with the CCSC team, via phone or in person.

Your feedback and attendance are vital to the success of the program. We look forward to this discussion and please contact us via the [CCSC Inbox](#) with any talking points your agency specifically wants to cover.

The tentative date for the Q3 APC Quarterly Meeting will be **April 17, 2014**.

The CCSC Team would like to thank all charge card program participants for all of your continued hard work, contributions, and accomplishments. If you have any questions, please send an e-mail to the [CCSC Inbox](#).






Agency of the Quarter

The Charge Card Service Center is pleased to congratulate the **Agency of the Quarter for Q1 FY14, Rural Development** and Ondray James (RD APC). Please see figure 1, showing their outstanding metrics. The **Q1 FY14 Honorable Mention** agency is **Food Safety and Inspection Service** and Janet Elm (FSIS APC). Congratulations!

Q1 FY14		
Rural Development (RD)		
	Q4-2013	Q1-2014
Convenience Checks Usage	0.45%	0.58%
Transactions Final Approved within 60 days	99.46%	98.27%
	Q1-2013	Q1-2014
Spend Increase	\$828,820	\$879,980

Figure 1. Agency of Quarter Metrics

The CCSC is now basing the Agency of the Quarter selection on an additional criteria factor in efforts to diversify the agencies that may be eligible for the award. Please keep in mind the selection of the Agency is a CCSC internal process that is done at the end of each quarter based on statistics and compliance efforts by each agency during the quarter specified.

Criteria	Desired Outcome
Convenience Check Usage	Elimination of convenience checks is always favorable. If your agency cannot eliminate checks, reducing usage of checks over the quarter is noted.
Transactions Final Approved within 60 days	Ninety-eight percent or better demonstrates the agency's effort to reduce suspensions and maintain proper oversight.
Spend Increase	A spend increase leads to an increase in rebates to the USDA.
Green Purchasing 	Agency has at least 1% of total transactions deemed green.
Compliance for QTR	Agency has responded to QTR requests in a timely manner.
Compliance to APC Certification of LAPC Review	Agency has submitted certification to CCSC in a timely manner.
Compliance to Dormant Account List Report	Agency has responded to CCSC in a timely manner, or Agency had no dormant cards.

New Training Webinars Posted on CCSC Web Site

In December 2013, the CCSC presented two new training modules to the APCs. The topics were generated based on need and questions from the community.

The trainings are now housed on the CCSC Web site. The training is not mandatory, but can be viewed as reference material to the Charge Card Program. Please visit the links listed to see both video and PDF versions of the modules.

Training Module	Video	PDF
How to Complete the Comments Tab in Access Online	[Windows Media Player]	[PDF]
Waivers for Electronic Payments	[Windows Media Player]	[PDF]

Score Cards

Green Purchasing Program Score Card

The CCSC is providing you with a Green Purchasing Program (GPP) Score Card (refer to figure 2, on [page 4](#)) that shows how many green transactions each agency made in Q1 FY14. The score card also compares each agency's green transaction totals to overall transaction totals for the quarter. The agencies highlighted in green had a variance over 1%, which means over 1% of their total transactions made were green purchases.



Convenience Check Score Card

As a reminder and in accordance with the [AGAR ADVISORY No. 52](#), agencies and cardholders may not use convenience checks for purchases or payments unless there is an applicable electronic funds waiver number that allows such use. Refer to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 208—Management of Federal Agency Disbursements, Section 208.4 Waivers ([31 CFR 208.4](#)) for details on the waivers.

Agencies are expected to significantly reduce, and to eventually eliminate, the use of convenience checks. Agencies are also expected to sharply reduce their number of authorized check writers and check stock, eventually eliminating this duty altogether.

APCs/LAPCs shall advise their cardholders that convenience checks may not be used to make purchases or payments absent an applicable waiver. LAPCs must review cardholders' authorization to have checks and shall cancel check-writing authorizations of cardholders who do not purchase supplies or services in the scope of authorized agency waivers. They must also collect, record, and destroy unneeded blank check stocks. APCs/LAPCs shall develop procedures to eliminate convenience checks pursuant to AGAR Advisory No. 52. Agencies shall continue to explore alternative payment methods for categories of transactions covered by waivers.

Figure 3, [page 5](#), the **To Reduce Use by 25%, Check # Threshold** column displays the maximum number of checks an agency can use to stay within their 25% reduction rate. The 25% reduction is based off of the FY13's total number of checks used by the agency.



Convenience Check Usage by Agency

In addition, the CCSC provides you with monthly convenience checks metrics by Agency (refer to figures 4-5 on [page 6](#)). The CCSC uses these statistics to track and monitor the checks usage to ensure that the annual reduction goal of 25% is being met.

Note: Although there was check usage in FY14 Q1, figures 4-5 appear to have no volume for FY14 YTD. This is because the volumes were so low they did not register to the scale of the graphs. In addition, please reference the score card on [page 5](#) to see convenience check usage by agency.

Green Purchasing Program Score Card Q1 FY14

Department Name	Agency Name	Agency Number	Total # Transactions	Total \$ Transactions Amount	Total # Green Transactions	Total \$ Green Transactions Amount	% Variance in # Transactions	% Variance \$ Transactions Amount
MRP	AMS	02	3,952	\$853,928.75	52	\$4,905.83	1.32%	0.57%
	APHIS	34	16,940	\$4,626,237.90	150	\$21,626.58	0.89%	0.47%
	GIPSA	36	916	\$175,609.49	8	\$918.56	0.87%	0.52%
	ARS	03	35,229	\$16,885,978.28	198	\$67,660.83	0.56%	0.40%
REE	ERS	18	79	\$40,484.44	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	NASS	20	1,076	\$265,344.84	14	\$4,279.38	1.30%	1.61%
	NIFA	22	143	\$51,864.93	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	OS	01	115	\$40,801.26	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
DM	OAQ	06	29	\$1,052.58	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	OC	13	96	\$36,260.46	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	OCE	38	34	\$19,598.61	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	NAD	39	108	\$25,043.64	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	OBPA	42	12	\$9,818.98	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	OES	63	23	\$5,670.76	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	OCIO	64	668	\$237,868.03	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	HL	72	48	\$13,181.94	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	DM	75	531	\$316,997.84	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	OASCR	84	67	\$40,954.03	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
FFAS	OCFO	90	532	\$558,886.23	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
	RMA	08	265	\$34,294.26	1	\$189.40	0.38%	0.55%
	FAS	10	441	\$129,352.91	2	\$469.57	0.45%	0.36%
	FSA FA	57	2,128	\$436,190.19	35	\$25,830.38	1.64%	5.92%
FS	FSA CE	97	8,733	\$1,195,078.77	259	\$24,783.50	2.97%	2.07%
	FS	11	80,808	\$25,956,704.96	277	\$70,267.19	0.34%	0.27%
	OGC	14	330	\$77,920.15	2	\$377.34	0.61%	0.48%
	NRCS	16	7,698	\$2,280,424.14	247	\$45,341.72	3.21%	1.99%
RD	RD	07	3,298	\$879,979.53	48	\$10,423.24	1.46%	1.18%
	FSIS	37	1,824	\$694,125.25	17	\$3,209.60	0.93%	0.46%
	FNS	30	1,925	\$844,755.69	27	\$4,973.16	1.40%	0.59%
	OIG	23	197	\$181,739.88	-	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
Total			168,245	\$56,916,148.72	1,337	\$285,256.28	0.79%	0.50%

Figure 2. Green Purchasing Program Score Card Q1 FY14

Convenience Check Score Card FY14 YTD

Agency	# Checks FY13	\$ Checks FY13	# Checks FY14 YTD	\$ Checks FY14 YTD	# Variance FY13-FY14 YTD	\$ Variance FY13-FY14 YTD	To Reduce Use by 25%, Check # Threshold
01 - OSEC	3	\$4,250.00	0	\$0.00	100.00%	100.00%	2
03 - ARS	3,942	\$2,186,928.20	710	\$8,456.46	81.99%	99.61%	2,957
07- RD	130	\$39,101.10	19	\$125.58	85.38%	99.68%	98
08 - RMA	18	\$5,256.66	3	\$7.74	83.33%	99.85%	14
10 - FAS	224	\$113,477.52	21	\$391.81	90.63%	99.65%	168
11 - FS	19,651	\$14,663,243.46	3,281	\$41,340.87	83.30%	99.72%	14,738
16 - NRCS	52	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	100.00%	100.00%	39
18 - ERS	34	\$13,508.18	0	\$0.00	100.00%	100.00%	26
20 - NASS	361	\$84,488.55	87	\$358.38	75.90%	99.58%	271
22 - NIFA	22	\$7,216.61	1	\$1.70	95.45%	99.98%	17
57 - FSA-FA	393	\$121,228.59	43	\$246.74	89.06%	99.80%	295
64 - OCIO	258	\$17,178.87	47	\$38.46	81.78%	99.78%	194
75 - DM	4	\$18,841.77	1	\$34.00	75.00%	99.82%	3
84 - OASCR	1	\$3,000.00	1	\$50.98	0.00%	98.30%	0
97 - FSA-CE	3,569	\$728,252.46	614	\$1,634.71	82.80%	99.78%	2,677
Total	28,662	\$18,005,971.97	4,828	\$52,687.43	83.16%	99.71%	21,497

Figure 3. Convenience Check Score Card FY14 YTD

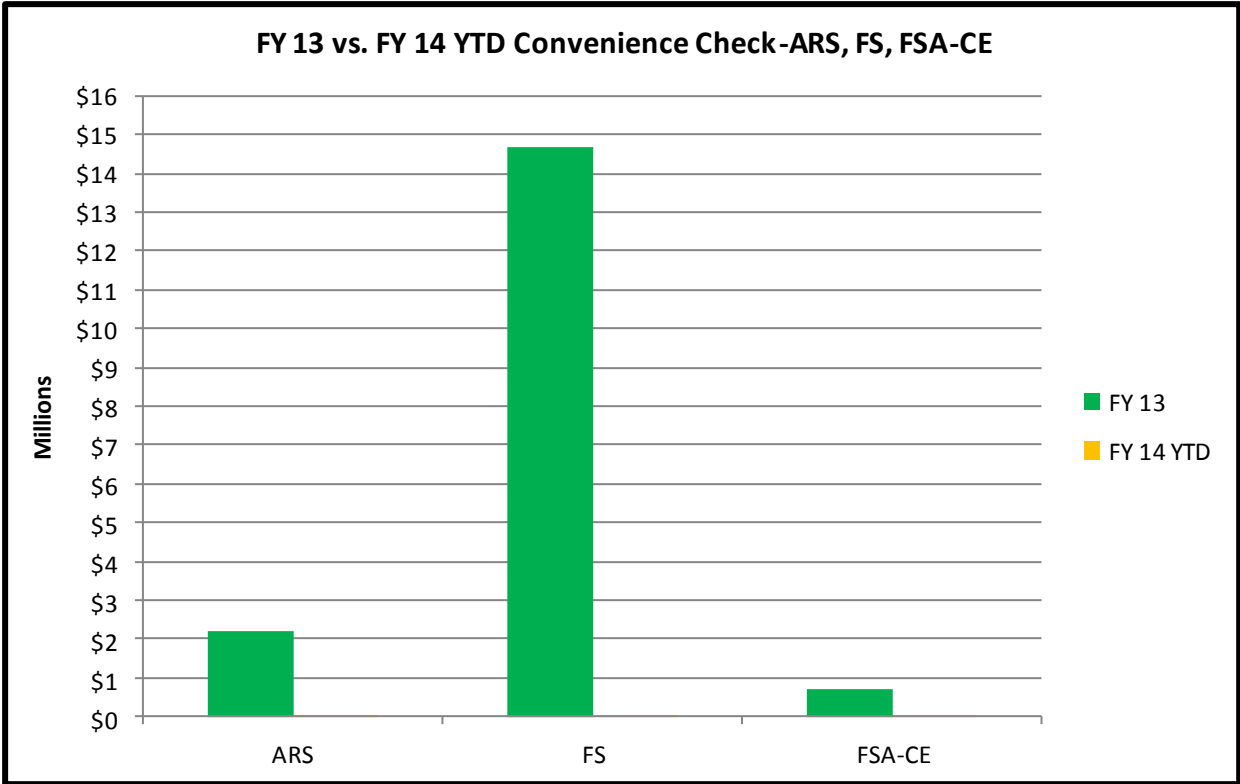


Figure 4. Convenience Check Usage ARS, FS, FSA-CE FY14 YTD

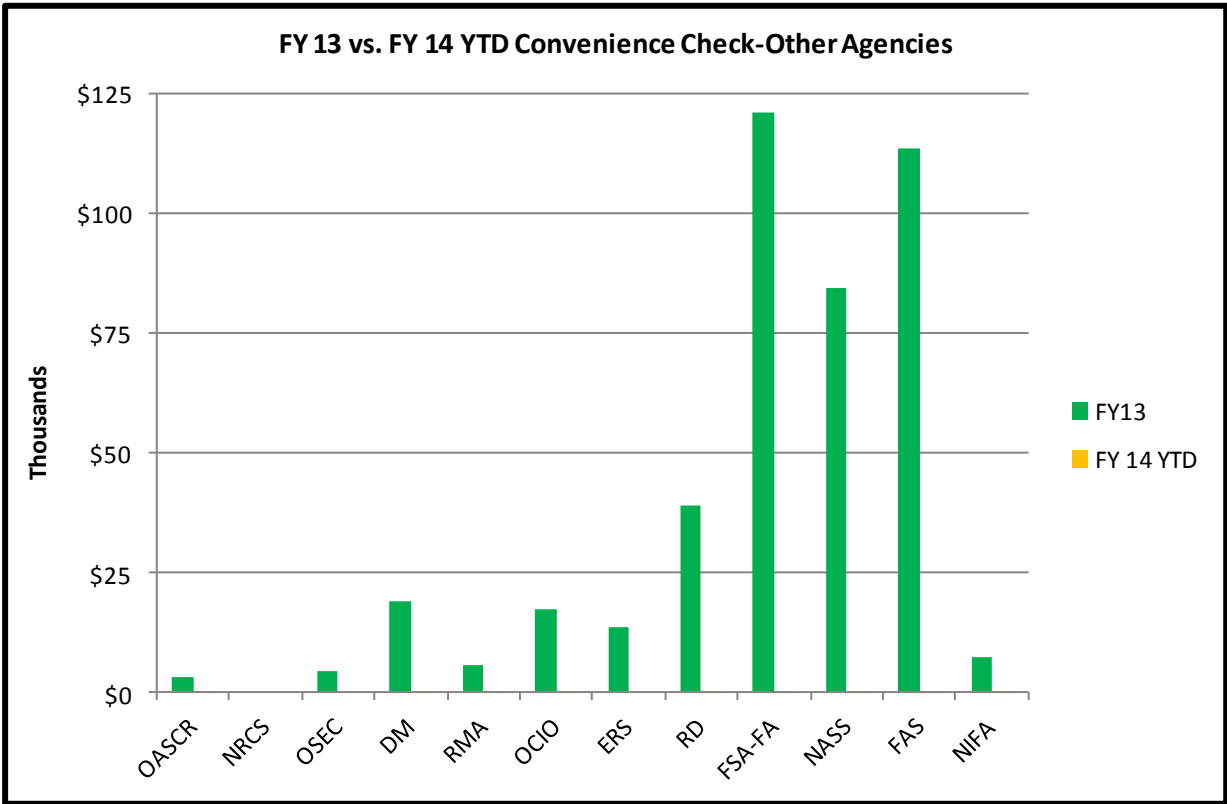


Figure 5. Convenience Check Usage for All Other Agencies FY14 YTD

Reminder for LAPC Quarterly Reviews and APC Certification Checklists

This is a reminder that *LAPC Quarterly Review Checklists* for October 1–December 31, 2013, are due to APCs by February 28, 2014. The *APC Certification of LAPC Quarterly Reviews* of all *LAPC Quarterly Review Checklists* is due to the CCSC by March 7, 2014. If you have any further questions on this process please send an e-mail to the [CCSC Inbox](#).

Quarter Reviewed:	For the Months of:	Due Date to APC:	Due Date to the CCSC:
Q1 FY14	October – December	February 28, 2014	March 7, 2014
Q2 FY14	January – March	May 30, 2014	June 9, 2014
Q3 FY14	April – June	August 29, 2014	September 8, 2014
Q4 FY14	July – September	November 28, 2014	December 8, 2014

New FY14 Dates for Cardholder Account Suspensions and Suspension Lifts

On September 13, 2013, a communication was sent via e-mail to APCs outlining the new dates for suspension and suspension lifts for FY14. If you have any questions on this process, please send an e-mail to the CCSC at the [CCSC Inbox](#).

Notification of Suspension	Cardholder Suspension	1 st Suspension Lift	2 nd Suspension Lift
December 15, 2013	January 8, 2014	January 23, 2014	February 11, 2014
January 15, 2014	February 10, 2014	February 24, 2014	March 11, 2014
February 14, 2014	March 10, 2014	March 24, 2014	April 9, 2014
March 14, 2014	April 8, 2014	April 23, 2014	May 9, 2014
April 15, 2014	May 8, 2014	May 23, 2014	June 10, 2014
May 15, 2014	June 9, 2014	June 23, 2014	July 9, 2014
June 16, 2014	July 8, 2014	July 23, 2014	August 11, 2014
July 15, 2014	August 8, 2014	August 22, 2014	September 9, 2014
August 15, 2014	September 8, 2014	September 23, 2014	October 9, 2014



Visit the [CCSC Web site](#) to access training on the charge card program today!

How to Complete the Comments Tab in Access Online

The [How to Complete Comments Tab in Access Online](#) training is for all participants of the USDA charge card program, which includes cardholders, Approving Officials (AOs), Local Agency Program Coordinators (LAPCs), and Agency Program Coordinator (APCs).

The CCSC strongly recommends that this training be provided to all cardholders, AOs, and LAPCs within your specific agency.

Data required for convenience checks is used to create the yearly 1099 MISC Report, which is a legal requirement for the USDA to gather and report the convenience check type of payment information to the IRS. For each transaction that has inaccurately formatted, missing data, or incorrect data, the USDA National Finance Center (NFC) has to contact each individual cardholder and request the information to complete the 1099 MISC report, which is due to the IRS by January 31st. Failure to collect and store the correct information places USDA in violation of IRS rules and subjects the department to possible penalties.

Completing the Comments Tab Conv. Checks TIN# Field

What data do you enter:

- Enter the TIN/EIN/SSN number, using the first nine characters in the field.
- Enter *only* nine numeric characters in this field (no spaces, special characters, or letters).
- Ensure the [IRS W-9 form](#) information for the TIN/EIN/SSN matches the information you enter into this field.
- General information, such as “on file” is not an acceptable entry for this field.
- Do not press the **Enter** or **Tab** key within this field.

Agency Specific Data Field

What data do you enter:

- Enter any information that is specific to your agency in this field.
- For green purchases, enter “Green” in the field (the quotations are not needed).
- If needed, you may enter agency-specific data and “green” into the field. You do not need to enter “not green,” “N/A,” or “no green available” into the field.

Conv Ck Mer Inf/Waiver# Field

What data do you enter:

- Include all of the following merchant information *and* waiver number: Merchant Name, Address, City, State, Zip Code; and the applicable [DCIA Waiver Number](#).

The screenshot shows the 'Comments' tab in the Access Online system. The tab is active, and the form contains the following fields:

- Conv. Checks TIN#**: A text input field for the TIN/EIN/SSN number.
- Agency Specific Data**: A text input field for agency-specific information.
- Conv Ck Mer Inf / Waiver#**: A text input field for merchant information and waiver number.
- Goods Recvd Date**: A text input field for the date of receipt.
- Item Description**: A text input field for a description of the item.

A **Save Comments** button is located at the bottom of the form.

- Generic, general information in this field, such as “W-9 on file,” is not acceptable documentation for this field.
- Do not press the **Enter** or **Tab** key within this field.

Goods Recvd Date Field

What data do you enter:

- Enter the date in MM/DD/YYYY format, for example, 03/01/2013.

Item Description Field

What data do you enter:

- Enter specific, concise, and clear information for reviewers (APC, LAPC, AO, and analysts/auditors) to understand what was purchased.
- Generic, general descriptions such as “miscellaneous” or “on file” are not acceptable documentation for this field.

Examples of Correct Data Entry in the Comments Tab

Conv. Checks TIN#
123456789

Agency Specific Data

Conv Ck Mer Inf / Waiver#
Home Depot;1234 Anywhere CT;Washington,DC;20250;3

Goods Recvd Date
12/17/2013

Item Description
two drawer file cabinet

Save Comments

Figure 6. Convenience Check Data Entry on Comments Tab

Summary Allocations Transaction Line Items **Comments** Approval History Client Data

The Comments tab provides the ability to enter comments specific to your organization that enable the gathering of additional information about a transaction.

Conv. Checks TIN#

Agency Specific Data
Green

Conv Ck Mer Inf / Waiver#

Goods Recvd Date
10/31/2013

Item Description
Copy Paper - 30% Post Consumer Recyclable Paper

Save Comments

Figure 7. Green Purchase Data Entry on Comments Tab

CCSC FY14 Schedule of Activities

The CCSC sent out a communication on Wednesday, November 6, 2013 that included a [CCSC Projected FY14 Schedule of Activities](#).

Please reference the flyer as needed and pass it along to other team members who would benefit from the information as well. If you have any suggestions please contact the [CCSC Inbox](#).

January 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year's Day	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Cardholder Suspensions	9 Suspension Lifts	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Martin Luther King Jr. Birth- day (Govt Closed)	21	22	23 APC Quarterly Meeting & Suspension Lifts	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



USDA Departmental Management
Charge Card Service Center
Reporter's Building
Washington, DC

The CCSC welcomes your feedback. Please send us an e-mail at the [CCSC Inbox](#) about ways we can improve the newsletter, with topics you would like included in upcoming newsletters, and/or questions you may have. Thank you!